

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE "ACCESS & EQUITY UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM"**

### Description and Goals

The Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program is an optional method of pursuing any or all of the following Access and Equity Program goals:

1. Address financial needs of traditional underrepresented students by structuring and maintaining state programs for undergraduate students.
2. Remove barriers that inhibit transfer from two-year to baccalaureate degree granting institutions.
3. Continue to strengthen South Carolina's historically black colleges to ensure that they will be able to fulfill their missions as full partners South Carolina's higher education system and provide quality education programs.

Senior institutions, regional campuses of the University of South Carolina, and South Carolina technical colleges may utilize a portion of their access and equity funds to provide scholarships to underrepresented students to diversify the educational enterprise.

The program is designed to serve underrepresented South Carolina resident students who have proven their ability to do college level work. Therefore, grantees who maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 will be eligible to receive additional grants in subsequent years if funds are available.

Priority should be given to applications of full-time students when making Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program awards. Remaining available funds may be awarded to part-time learners enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs at the public institutions defined in Chapter 113 of Title 59 of 1976 code..

### Submittal Date

University requests to utilize Access and Equity Program funds for awarding Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program to eligible students should be submitted no later than May 31 annually to:

Higher Education Access and Equity Program Coordinator  
S. C. Commission on Higher Education  
1333 Main Street, Suite 200  
Columbia, S. C. 29201

### Eligibility Requirements - Full-time Students

The amount authorized for each "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" grantee is any amount up to \$1,000 for the academic year with no guarantee that "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" funds will be provided for the student in subsequent years.

1. In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" award, the applicant must:
  - a. be a United States citizen;
  - b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statutes 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education
  - c. Have completed at least 60 semester hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed the requirements for the Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science degree or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;
  - d. have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 or the minimum required for the degree program of study;
  - e. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

### First-time Entering Freshmen Students

1. In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program " award, the applicant must:
  - a. be a United States citizen;
  - b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statutes 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education
  - c. have a high school GPA of at least 3.0;
  - d. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

### C. Sophomore Students

1. In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program", the applicant must:
  - a. be a United States citizen;
  - b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statutes 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education
  - c. have completed at least 30 semester hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed at least 30 semester hours towards the requirements for the Associate in Arts, the Associate in Science, or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;
  - d. have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0;
  - e. have received an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" award as a first-time entering freshman.

### Eligibility Requirements - Part-time Students

The amount authorized for "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" awards for students in this category will be prorated based on the number of credit hours for which the student is enrolled.

1. To be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" award, the applicant must:
  - a. be a United States citizen;
  - b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statutes 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education
  - c. be at least 21 years old as a first-time freshman or have been out of school at least two years prior to re-enrolling;
  - d. have a high school diploma or equivalent (G.E.D. certificate);
  - e. have completed at least 12 hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree;
  - f. have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0;
  - g. enroll at least a minimum of 6 credit hours as a degree-seeking student.

### Administrative Responsibilities

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will have overall administrative responsibility to include:

1. requesting Access and Equity Program funding through the Budget and Control Board;
2. biannual evaluation notifying eligible institutions in timely fashion concerning steps required on their parts in the application, awarding and reporting procedures;
3. receiving and processing requests from institutions for funding;
4. recommending allocation of funds to institutions in equitable fashion on the basis of available funds and institutional
5. gathering and analyzing pertinent information regarding grant recipients from institutions.

Eligible public postsecondary institutions will have the following responsibilities:

1. requesting Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program funds from the Commission on Higher Education by May 31 for the fiscal year commencing on July 1;
2. providing matching funds on a dollar for dollar basis for the Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program ;
3. receiving and screening applications, and selecting recipients;
4. utilizing other available financial aid funds in conjunction with these awards to recruit and assist as many underrepresented students as possible;
5. submitting to the Commission on Higher Education any information concerning recipients needed and requested by the Commission for reporting and accounting purposes. Such information shall include certification that all students receiving "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" awards are South Carolina residents (who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statutes 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education).